CHAPTER VI

THE WORLD EMANATES FROM AND RETURNS TO THE SPIRIT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The origin and the nature of the world is a subject that baffled the metaphysician and the scientist alike, both in the East and in the West. The question whether it is real or unreal, created or manifested, independently existing by itself or dependant on something, haunted the philosophers of every age and clime. The evils of suffering, death and decay existing in this world, has raised the questions of its purpose, meaning and ultimate destiny. These questions were asked time and again by men of curiosity and intelligence and many metaphysical theories were formulated, scientific explanations given, and religious solutions offered from time to time, as answers to satisfy the intellectual curiosities and the emotional temperaments of men of every age. Finding them to be unsatisfactory or inadequate, the disillusioned man asked the same questions almost in every age and the inquiry continues to operate in the minds of the modern intellectuals today.

6.1.1 The nature of the World as conceived in the Modern West and the East

Absolute Idealism dominated the philosophic scene in the West during the last quarter of the 19th and the early 20th century. The Absolute
Idealists conceived the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute, as an intellectual abstraction and they considered the world as an appearance, as a result of its inner contradictions. But the modern Scientific discoveries with a number of significant laws, explaining the control of natural forces proved the existence of the world to be more real than an appearance. Moreover the problems faced by modern man, the reality of suffering and death experienced by millions of human beings during the world wars, led him to reject the view of the Absolutist that the world is an appearance. The modern man realised that the world is not a magic show or a phantasmagoria but a reality where there is a continuous struggle between life and death for existence. A number of Idealistic and pluralistic systems and a few scientific and metaphysical theories of evolution, which emphasise the reality of the world arose during the later part of 19th and twentieth centuries as a revolt against the Absolute Idealists, condemning their views.

Among a number of philosophical and religious systems in India the system of Vedānta gained high importance in the modern period. The Advaita Vedānta of Sankaracharya was considered as a system of Absolute Idealism. Sankara interpreted the Upanisads with logical acumen and built a monistic system of philosophy which maintains 'that Brahman alone is real, the world is illusory and that the soul is non-different from Brahman'. The illusory character of the world was explained by him through the doctrine of māyā. Ramanuja, the Visistādvaitin, spared no efforts to examine and criticise the māya-vada of Sankara which explains the world as illusory, to its logical ends.
For Ramanuja, the world is a real manifestation and a part of *Brahman* and therefore it is not illusory.

6.1.2 Radhakrishnan’s description of the World, a synthesis of East and West

Radhakrishnan who has a deep and sound knowledge of Western philosophy made a study of Indian philosophical systems and the various Scientific theories of Evolution in the West and found many similarities between the Absolute idealistic systems in the West and the *Vedāntic* Absolutist systems at home. He analysed and examined the various critical views against Absolute Idealism. His keen mind and subtle vision led him to suggest his own view on the nature of the world, mainly based on the *Upanisads* and the *Vedānta* as well as the best elements in the Western systems of idealistic Philosophy and Science. He consciously eliminated the extremes and negative elements concerning this notion of the world from Absolute idealism and pluralistic systems of the Western tradition and from the monistic *Vedānta* of Sankara and the *Visistadvaita* of Ramanuja and brought about a synthesis between the two traditions. Many of these ideas have been very skillfully woven and brought within the framework of the *Upanisadic* and *Vedānta* philosophy, for its basic structure appears more Indian than Western, though, "it is touched up and set off by a play of lights and shadows from the West". Conger finds many familiar idealistic arguments easily recognizable in their "Indian dress".
Radhakrishnan accepted the views of the pluralists and the Evolutionists concerning the reality of the world as against the extreme doctrines of the Absolutists who maintain that it is a mere appearance. Likewise he took into consideration the theistic version of the reality of the world in some of the Upanisads, Bhagavadgītā and Visistadvaita, eliminating the negative extremes of māyā doctrine in Advaita Vedānta. He attempted to construct an independent theory of introducing positive elements in his conception of the world in order to save the world and give it a real meaning. He has very skillfully synthesised the various elements after making necessary modifications without giving scope for criticism that his theory is a conglomeration of various ideas combined together.

6.1.3 A Spiritual View of the Universe

If Sankara's sole objective was to save Brahman from the critical arguments of the Bhedabheda-vadins of his time, the chief aim of Radhakrishnan, was 'to save the world and give it a real meaning' at a time when the plurasitic Schools of thought and the Modern Scientific theories of Evolution rejected the Absolutistic notion of the Universe that the world is an appearance and emphasised on its reality. Besides there were a number of criticisms against Indian Philosophy in general and Advaita Vedānta in particular which, according to me, emphasised the illusory character of the world. Radhakrishnan had to fight tooth and nail argumentatively in order to prove the reality of the world more emphatically, surpassing perhaps even some of the arguments put forward by realistic systems of Philosophy both in the East and in the West. His system of philosophy finds accommodation in a
realistic view of the Universe, which is of a temporal character. That is why, sometimes his philosophy is called as ‘A Spiritual view of the Universe’.

6.2 NATURE OF THE WORLD

6.2.1 The World is Real, not Illusory

Radhakrishnan vehemently rejected the view that the world is an illusion, a dream or a mirage and affirmed its reality and significance. We find reference in all his writings describing the world in positive terms and affirming the reality of the World.

"This world is not an illusion, it is not nothingness, for it is willed by God and therefore is real"³ "The cosmic process is not a meaningless one but aims at the realisation of the ideal"⁴ "The purpose of the cosmic evolution is to reveal the Spirit underlying it"⁵ "The world is the training ground for mankind to attain perfection".⁶

The world according to Radhakrishnan is not a waste-land nor altogether a place of woe, and human life is not a blind accident in a blind impersonal process. The world process has a pattern and a goal according to which it is marching through the paths that contain blind alleys and relapses. It is moving towards an ideal state of happiness, truth, beauty and goodness, though the movement is slow and painful.
6.2.2 The world is temporal, not eternal

The world as sāmsāra, for Radhakrishnan, is not a static one but perpetual procession of events and a succession of changing states; hence it is subject to change, decay and death. Its reality is radically different from the being of Absolute-God.

"If the constant is real, the changing is less than real".⁷ "The world is different kind of existence when compared to the Supreme Being".⁸ "It is temporal but not eternal".⁹ "It does not mean, says Radhakrishnan, that the temporal process is a tragedy or an aberration. The reality of the world is not itself, but it is in the thought and being of God the creator".¹⁰

6.2.3 The nature of the world is indescribable, but not meaningless

On account of the temporal and dependant character of the world as against the independence and eternity of Brahman, it is sometimes argued that the world is not self-sufficient or self-explanatory. Its nature and character is often described as indeterminate, indescribable (anirvacānīya) and hence it is neither real nor unreal.

"Though the world is temporal and dependant on Brahman, it is not for that matter meaningless, unintelligible or illusory".¹¹ "It is not our imagination or dream but it is put into our heads by the Divine Being. The world is not a deceptive facade of something underlying it. It is real though imperfect. Since the Supreme is the basis of the world, the world cannot be unreal".¹² "Cosmic existence partakes the character of the real and the
unreal". All things in the world, though unreal and fleeting contain an element of reality for, Being is present in them all.

6.3 THE EMANATION OF THE WORLD FROM THE SPIRIT - A PROCESS OF DESCENT

Radhakrishnan examines several monistic and idealistic systems of India and the West in his book Indian Philosophy Vol. I and II, which includes the Advaitic and Visistadvaitic systems of Sankara and Ramanuja. According to him, Sankara's Monistic system finds its echoes in the philosophies of Paramanides, Plato, Plotinus, Bradley and Bergson in the West and Nagarjuna and some Upanisads in the East. Likewise the system of Ramanuja finds its echoes in Hegel's Absolute Idealism in the West and Bhāgavādgītā and some of the Upanisads in the East. All these Monistic systems have described how and why of the world and its relationship to the One Supreme Being, in various ways. The significant aspects of these Monistic Systems had a heavy bearing on the sensitive mind of Radhakrishnan in his preparation for the reconstruction of Vedāntā.

6.3.1 The Problem of relating the World of Multiplicity to the One Spirit

At the time he took up the study of these Monistic Systems Radhakrishnan had before him two familiar criticisms levelled against Indian Philosophy in general and the system of Vedanta in particular.
First, the World has been described as illusory in Vedānta with the aid of the doctrine of māyā. Second, the System of Vedānta was declared as Pantheistic in the sense that the world and the Brahman are identical in substance. In other words the Absolute is subjected to the objects of the world by taking away its Absoluteness.

Therefore it became absolutely necessary for Radhakrishnan not only to repudiate the two criticisms but also to exclude the pantheistic view and the illusory description of the world in the reconstruction of his Vedāntic System by reinterpreting positively the doctrine of māyā.

Vedānta describes the nature of the world as indeterminate (anirvacānīya) meaning that its relation to the Spirit cannot be logically articulated. The World has also been explained as not self sufficient or self-explanatory. So, the problem as to how to account for the origin of the world and to explain its relation to the Pure Being which is the Spirit, drew the attention of Radhakrishnan. He raised the question as to how the Ultimate Reality which is essentially spirit could become a limited being and appear as the non-spirit (in the world of matter). As an Absolute Idealist, he felt that the Supreme Being should be transcendent and above all the multiformities of the world without being sullied by their characteristics and at the same time the latter should be related to the former.

In order to provide for the supremacy, the aloofness as well as ultimacy of Brahman, the Spirit, with regard to its relation with the objective world, Radhakrishnan refers to the fourfold character of the Supreme.
6.3.2 The four phases of the Supreme Spirit (Brahman)

In order to provide for a wide, comprehensive and highest Reality as the ultimate principle, Radhakrishnan introduces the concept of the Supreme in four phases or four statues or the fourfold character of the Ultimate Reality, taking cue from some of the Upanisads.

Brahman the Ultimate is the transcendental Reality. Isvara, the personal God is the Creator of the World. Hiranyagarbha, the World Spirit, the creative and active principle to direct and guide the process of creative evolution of the world with a teleological plan and goal.

These are the simultaneous four sides of the One Reality. They are not parts but planes of Reality arranged in an order of logical priority. In Radhakrishnan’s view these distinctions are of great significance for a balanced view of the Supreme.

6.3.3 The Relation of the World to Brahman, Isvara and Hiranyagarbha

To answer the question how the four phases of the Supreme are related to one another in bringing out the world of Material objects into existence. According to Radhakrishnan the confusion in regard to the status of the world can be avoided if we keep in mind the fourfold character of the supreme. The world is not independent of Brahman but it rests in Brahman. The relationship between the two cannot be logically articulated. The power of creation is maya. The world process is a mixture of being and non-being, sat
and asat. Both Hiranyagarbha and his world are subject to time and should be distinguished from the Eternal. Radhakrishnan observes:

"The Absolute conceived as it is in itself, independent of any creation, is called Brahman. When it is thought of having manifested itself as the universe, it is Viraj; when It is thought of as the Spirit moving everywhere in the universe it is called Hiranyagarbha; when It is thought of personal God; creating, protecting and destroying the universe, It is called Isvara".15

In his commentary on the Brähma Sūtra, Radhakrishnan explains the inner relationship thus: "The world is an appearance of Brahman, a partial manifestation of Isvara and an organic manifestation of Hiranyagarbha".16

6.3.4 Unfoldment of the World

The fourfold character of Reality, though indicates the relationship with the World, it does not explain as to how the process of the unfoldment of the Reality takes place. In other words, how the spirit which is above multiformities, being essentially spirit becomes a non-spirit; how the eternal subject becomes its opposite, the non eternal object, for the unfoldment of the multiple objects of the world, is inexplicable. However, Radhakrishnan explains this process of unfoldment thus: The Spirit which transcends all dualities, when looked at from the cosmic end, becomes sundered into two - the transcendental subject facing the transcendental object. The eternal subject "I" confronts the pseudo eternal object "not I". The eternal subject "I", sometimes he calls as Purusha, Spirit, God, Being, etc. Likewise the pseudo eternal object
"Not I" is called by him by the names such as Prakriti, Matter, māyā, Non-being.

To preserve the purity and the eternality of the Spirit and to account for the changing nature of the world, Radhakrishnan thinks that it is necessary to assume a diminution, a negative principle, a fall, a degradation, a lapse, a degeneration, an objectification or obscuring in the One reality.

6.3.5 Māyā or Non Being, the Negative Principle

To the question, "how and why" such an accident of objectification or lapse occurs in the One Reality in the process of becoming, Radhakrishnan says that it is difficult to answer this fact. However, he makes an attempt to offer an explanation. To do so, he considers it necessary to assume a negative principle like Plato's Non-being or Aristotle's Matter which could explain the unfoldment of the Supreme. While commenting on the Bhāgavādgitā he says that "When the element of negation is introduced into the Absolute, its inwardness is unfolded in the process of becoming. The original unity becomes pregnant with the whole cause of the world".15

This element of negation he calls as Non-being and sometimes as māyā or Prakriti or Matter. According to him, the whole cosmic process is the interaction between the two eternal principles of Being and Non-being, Spirit and Matter, Purusha and Prakriti, Īsvara and māyā, Being and Nothingness and 'self and not self', which are different pairs of names Radhakrishnan uses for Being and Non-being. Non-being or māya which is responsible for the
imperfections is necessary to account for the world. Radhakrishnan says that, "Non-being is the necessary movement in Reality for the unfoldment of the Supreme".18

6.3.6 Being and Non-being explain the cosmic process

It is through the positive and negative principles of Being and Non-being, Īsvara and māyā, Radhakrishnan explains the becoming of the universe in Hegelian fashion. Each and every object of the world from the highest to the lowest of the objects of matter consists of these two Principles in different degrees. All the objects of the world are of the nature of both Being and Non-being (Sadasat-ātmaka). In his book, Appearance and Reality Bradley also brings out this truth of the world. The process of the universe is a perpetual overcoming of Non-being by Being. Being affirms itself and overcomes its opposite Non-being. Non-being according to Radhakrishnan, is the force which drives Being from its immovable self-identity and enables it to express itself. He refers to Hegel in this context who makes out that negation is "the power driving the Absolute Idea towards existence and driving existence back towards the Absolute Idea, which in the process actualizes, itself as Absolute Mind or Spirit".19

Being and Non-being are opposites, yet complementary poles of all existence. Non-being is dependent on being. It is the material through which ideals are actualized by Being. If there is no Non-being, there will be no existence, no becoming, and no manifestation. Non-being indicates the ontological priority of Being over Non-being.
The progress of the world can be measured by the supremacy of the Being over Non-being. The interaction between the two principles result in the production of various grades of beings in the world. The final goal and destiny of the universe is reached after the Being gains complete supremacy over Non-being. The distinction between Being and Non-being will be overcome gradually in the course of time. When Non-being is overcome by Being, the incomplete will be made complete and there will be the return of the non-being to the Being. When Non-Being is fully reduced to Being, the dualism between Being and Non-being, God and Matter ceases. The distinction between the creator God and the created universe vanishes and God or Being lapses into the Absolute. The dissolution of the world does not in any way affect the Absolute. The purpose of the Supreme is realistic and the world is restored to its original purity in the Pure being which is above all distinctions.

6.4 THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ

6.4.1 Sankara’s Doctrine of Māyā

The concept of māyā is a key concept and plays a pivotal role in the hands of Sankara, who upholds the purity, supremacy, eternality and ultimacy of Brahman. Through the notion of māyā, Sankara explains the significance of the personal God Īśvara, world of multifarious objects and plurality of souls without affecting the essential character of Brahman. He wielded the weapon of māya to describe the rise, continuance and final disappearance of the world and the individual souls.
Mayā has been described as neither real nor unreal, nor both. It has no beginning, (anādi). Its locus (asraya) as well as object (visaya) is Brahman. Mayā is the inherent power or potency or Sakti of Brahman. It is absolutely dependent and inseparable from Brahman like red hot glow is from a fire ball.

Mayā conceals Brahman and projects the world and its objects, making, concealing and projecting as its main functions. It is the reflector of Brahman as Isvara the personal God. Brahman in association with mayā becomes Isvara. Mayā and avidyā are considered at times as synonymous. Avidyā is the cause for the reflection of Brahman as multifarious individual souls. The appearance of Brahman as the world is the cause of mayā. Mayā is the mode of operation to activate in the production of the World and the souls.

The term maya indicates many a mystery of how and why of the world. The concept of maya was employed by Sankara as a double edged sword against the Bhedabheda-vādins and the Buddhists of his time in order to save Brahman, but at the cost of presenting the world as illusory. His logical acumen reminds us only Nagarjuna of the earlier period. Radhakrishnan says: "It is Sankara's excessive attachment to logical precision that leads him into somewhat misleading statements to the effect that the world is naught".20

6.4.2 Radhakrishnan’s notion of Mayā

Radhakrishnan during his time had to repudiate strongly the misunderstood Vedantic view of the world as illusory. His main attention was
drawn to reinterpret the doctrine of māyā of Sankara in such a way that the character of the world had to be described more positively than negatively. He had to undertake this heavy responsibility much against the criticisms of traditional Vedāntins who were strongly opposed to his fresh interpretations and arguments in support of his view. One can say safely today that this arduous task has been completed by him successfully since the view that the world is illusory for Vedāntins has been erased to some extent from the minds of the Western scholars but had to confront stiff resistance and opposition from the traditional Vedāntins who took cudgels against him. Rejecting the illusory character of the World, Radhakrishnan said: "Unreal the world is, illusory it is not."  

The traditional Vedāntins strongly opposed this view and said contradictorily, "illusory the world is, Unreal it is not". The World according to traditional Vedāntins is neither real nor unreal. In their view that which is neither real nor unreal cannot be anything but illusory. Influenced by the Absolute Idealists of the West, Radhakrishnan boldly adopts the view that the world is an appearance of the Real. Such a distinction between the world and reality is justified from the standpoint of Absolute Idealism. However the traditional Vedāntins did not approve of it, but strongly objected to the statement that the World is an appearance of the Real. For them the world is an illusory appearance of the Brahman. But in Radhakrishnan’s view the relationship between the world and the Reality cannot be logically explicated. However this inexplicability does not repudiate the existence of the world.
Thus Radhakrishnan strongly rejected the very statement which uphold the illusory character of the world, owing to māyā.

The concept of māyā conveys different meanings in the Philosophy of Radhakrishnan, which are more of a positive nature than some of the traditional meanings conveyed in Advaita. Such an attempt has been made by Radhakrishnan with the purpose of rubbing off the rugged edges of māya-vada and its resultant acosmism.

The liberal interpretation over the traditional one became necessary to save the world and to give it a positive meaning. The doctrine of māyā which wielded its power in the hands of Sankara, is a spent force in the hands of Radhakrishnan. It has lost its negative force and action.

6.4.3 Six meanings for the concept of Māyā

There are six distinct meanings for the concept of māyā found in the writings of Radhakrishnan. Prof. Donald Braue mentions them in his book.

6.4.3.1

The term māyā indicates the inexplicable mystery to the many ultimate questions concerning the how and the why of the Universe. Radhakrishnan points out that it is a mystery; even to the question why the reality is of four-fold character, he answered that no logical derivation possible. Some times he even suggests a wise agnosticism as the safest attitude in explaining cosmogonic questions since there is a mystery surrounding the
origin and end of the Universe. Radhakrishnan observes that who knows whence this creation is born. It is a mystery, māyā. The Real is the Spirit, the actual multiplicity is rooted in the Real. How? we do not know. It is a mystery. This inexplicable mystery in all the writings of Radhakrishnan is indicated by the term māyā.

6.4.3.2

Māyā is the power or Sakti of creation, of self-expression. This power of self-expression possessed by Isvara, (God), according to Radhakrishnan, is called māyā. In many passages in his writings Radhakrishnan maintains that māyā as the power of creation belongs to Isvara... māyā denotes Sakti or energy of Isvara. The word creation often mentioned by Radhakrishnan conveys the meaning of emanation of the world but not as creation as understood in Christianity and Judaism.

6.4.3.3

Māyā produces duality of Being and Non-being in the Universe. This pair has many synonyms in Radhakrishnan’s writings such as Purusa-Prakriti; Spirit-matter; Self-Not Self; Isvara-māyā. "Since the Lord is able to produce the Universe by means of the two elements of Being and Non Being..... they are said to be māya of God".22

According to Radhakrishan all things in the world partake the nature of Being and Non-Being, Spirit and matter. Therefore all the
**sat-asat-ātmaka.** Radhakrishan refers to the notions of Being and Non-Being as the two principles in the world which have been explained in the philosophies of Plato, Plotinus, Hegel and Bradley. He has an equivalent pair of terms from Indian Philosophy which he has included in his explanations and they are Prakriti and Purusa which convey the duality of Being and Non-Being.

6.4.3.4

*Māyā* is Prakriti, the Primal Matter. Radhakrishnanan identifies Prakriti, the primal matter with māyā. He writes: "Māyā is also used for prakriti, the objective principle, which the personal God uses for creation".23

6.4.3.5

*Māyā* is meant as concealment and sometimes as ignorance (*avidyā*). "The world and its changes constitute the self-concealment of God".24

Though in Sankara's Advaita, māyā has the two functions of 1) *avarana* and 2) *viksepa*, concealment of Brahman and Projection of the world in the place of Brahman, Radhakrishnan does not emphasise the second function for various reasons, but only the former. The main function of māyā in Radhakrishnan's thought is to conceal Brahman. He refers to māyā not as a veil as explained in Sankara but as the dress of God.25
6.4.3.6

Māyā indicates the one sided dependance of the world on Brahman. The illustration of Rope and the Snake, according to Radhakrishnan, depicts the one sided dependance. The world resides in Brahman just as the illusion of the snake resides in the rope. Vivarta-vāda as described by Radhakrishnan explains also this one sided dependance. But the traditional māyā-vādins object to this interpretation. They interpret vivarta-vāda as an argument to explain the illusory character of the world and its relation to Brahman in terms of illusory snake and the rope.

Thus the meanings which Radhakrishnan has conveyed in his writings for the notion of māyā do not indicate negative meaning. Sufficient care has been taken by Radhakrishnan to avoid the use of the term māyā to characterize the illusory nature of the world. In most of the places this term clearly conveys the meaning of mystery. Therefore, some of the traditional Vedantins have pointed out that he has not developed the doctrine of māyā as a significant theory in his scheme of thought. They criticised Radhakrishnan for interpreting Sankara’s doctrine of māyā very liberally without its acute rigour as warranted by Sankara’s Advaita. But Donald Braue is of the view that māyā is not a focal point in Radhakrishnan’s thought and that he had tended to ignore its significance in all his books and speeches. Likewise, R.P.Singh says that the attention of Radhakrishnan has not been drawn towards the central role of māyā doctrine or avidyā in as much as it did in the case of Sankara. In the words of R.P.Singh:
The problem how it came to be a limited being, how it appeared as non-spirit, even when it was essentially spirit, which was the principal problem before Sankara, did not engage Radhakrishnan’s attention. Though he raises the question, he does not concentrate on explaining the role of Avidyā (māyā) in the scheme of Reality, as Sankara does.²⁶

In the positive interpretation for the doctrine of māyā of Sankara, Radhakrishnan was influenced very much by Rabindranath Tagore. He acknowledges that, "In regard to my views on Hindu ethics and the doctrine of māyā I found great support in the writing of Rabindranath Tagore."²⁷

Tagore, in Radhakrishnan’s view, was opposed to the concept of world illusion and strongly protested against the world negating attitude. For his criticism on the doctrine of māyā of Sankara, Radhakrishnan found support in Tagore’s writings.

6.5 THE EVOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSE - A PROCESS OF ASCENT TO THE SPIRIT

In order to further establish the reality and the changeable nature of the Universe, Radhakrishnan introduces the evolutionary process of cosmos into his system.

In explaining their theories concerning the origin and development of the universe, many Western philosophers, especially the pluralists, have taken into consideration the latest discoveries in the fields of physical and biological sciences, which substituted the hypothesis of evolution for the Biblical view of creation of the universe. A philosophy which attempts to
explain the universe, in Radhakrishnan's view, should develop into a consistent pattern by taking into account the different sides of our experiences relating to the Cosmos studied by natural Sciences, to human behaviour studied by Psychology and History, to the world of values studied by Literature, Philosophy and Religion. If rightly interpreted, he thinks the theory of Evolution will not be inconsistent with highest Idealism. However, he observes that the theory of Evolution is unsatisfactory as an interpretation of the ultimate nature of the Universe, despite its immense value as an observed fact in the field of life Sciences. The theory is silent on the questions of its ultimate cause. Within the temporal process itself Science offers explanations for particular events, but it cannot deal with the question: Why there exists a temporal process at all? It does not contain its origin and meaning within itself. It is not self-explanatory. The meaning of this mystery, the origin and end of the world cannot be scientifically apprehended. Therefore, this needs metaphysical investigation.

6.5.1 One Single Purposive Principle

It is necessary to assume something behind the entire process of Evolution, which is not its own product, but its ultimate ground and driving power. To make it more self-sufficient and self-explanatory it is necessary to conceive a single spiritual principle, but not material one, immanent but not transcendent and teleological but not mechanical. Therefore, Radhakrishnan assumes the reality of a Single Supreme Spirit, which is at work in the whole course of cosmic evolution. For him Evolution is not a mechanical movement, but the expression of a purposive force which creates living organism and
endows them with the need to develop and endure in pursuance of a definite goal. Such a purposive Force cannot be a product of Evolution, but something external and beyond itself. All the Philosophers who have reflected on the implications of evolution agree that there is a mysterious reality behind it. Herbert Spencer called this inscrutable energy as God and Modern scientific metaphysicians such as Lloyd Morgan and Whitehead adopted this view.

6.5.2 God the Immanent Spirit (Hiranyagarbha, the World-Soul)

Many philosophers have felt that God is the reality working behind, beyond and within the wide panorama of cosmos and history. The religious instinct in human nature finds fulfilment in the consciousness of a Spiritual reality at the back of the cosmic forces. God is not the remote ground of the structure of the Universe, but the immanent spirit working in and through it all. Sometimes Radhakrishnan calls this Immanent Spirit as Hiranyagarbha or the World Soul. Creation of the world is a necessary part of God's Being. God needs the world for the fullness of his being. Radhakrishnan says:

The personality of God is possible only with reference to a world with its imperfections and capacity for progress. In other words the being of a personal God is dependant on the existence of a created order. God depends on creation, even as creation depends on God.28

6.5.3 Evolutionary theories of Scientific Metaphysicians of the West

Though Radhakrishnan was influenced by the various Western theories of cosmic evolution, he finds most of them inadequate or
unsatisfactory especially the theories of Bergson, Lloyd Morgan, Whitehead, General Smuts and Samuel Alexander. In Bergson, he finds his account concerning the rise of matter and of the accident of interaction as unsatisfactory. The account given by Lloyd Morgan regarding the relation between the timeless Divine purpose and the temporal unfolding was found to be inadequate. Alexander's brilliant attempt to form a general metaphysical scheme in consonance with modern Scientific developments suffers from certain fundamental disabilities. God in Whitehead's scheme is affected by the process of reality. What happens to God when the plan is achieved, when the primordial nature becomes the consequent, has not been clearly brought out by Whitehead. Though Radhakrishnan has criticised the evolutionary theories of these Scientific Metaphysicians, the fact that he has been deeply influenced by them especially Bergson and Whitehead, in the formulation of his own theory, cannot be easily overlooked.

6.5.4 The Creative Evolution - A synthesis of Western and Indian theories

Radhakrishnan has another source from which he has developed his theory of Creative Evolution, and it is the Taittiriya Upanisad. Radhakrishnan says that Indian thinkers conceived such an idea of cosmic evolution, more as a metaphysical hypothesis than as an empirically verified theory. Hence we find in this theory of creative evolution a blending of the modern idea of emergent evolution with ancient Indian view of Five Sheaths (Pancakoshas) - Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya.
6.5.5 The Cosmic Process of Creative Evolution: A Process of Ascent

In the process of cosmic Evolution there emerges successively - Matter (anna) Life (prāṇa) Mind (manas) or Consciousness, Self-consciousness (vijnāna) and Spirit (ānanda) forming a hierarchy of the manifestations of the Spirit in the world. These stages are not divided into parts but remain only as the phases of activity of the Spirit in the world. The process of cosmic evolution is a continuous one and there are no sharp divisions in it. Each higher level includes the lower and yet something more and novel is created. Life that emerges from matter does not contain only the material content but something higher and unique evolves. Every new quality that emerges indicates a jump and a deviation from the lower. In all these ascending series the presence of the essential characteristics of the Spirit such a creativity, change, order and progress, are found explicitly and implicitly.

6.5.5.1 Matter

Matter is the first manifested form of the cosmic existence. From the unmanifested Being (avyakta), we get the material manifestation. Matter is a concentrated structural energy which makes possible the creation of fresh forms, structures and types. It is as truly creative as living organism or mind. When atoms combine into a molecule, they acquire a new status. In virtue of the whole to which they belong they acquire new qualities which could not be deduced from their nature before combination. Every occurrence is a mystery. Existence is a continuous miracle. Physical science describes the way in which
various bodies behave and not why they do so. Matter is essentially creative in character and its processes are irreversible. Matter is regarded as the matter of the Universe. Creativeness is not confined only to the Vital and Mental aspects; but Matter also. At a certain time there came to be on the surface of the earth, abundant supplies of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, which provided suitable conditions for the rise of life.

6.5.5.2 Life

There is something specific in the behaviour of living organisms from microbes to mammals which is not traceable in the non-living. The processes of respiration and reproduction, growth and development are different from the physico-chemical reactions. A living organism maintains its specific structure and activities throughout all changes. Life is a dynamic equilibrium which tends to maintain itself.

A living organism adopts itself to its environment. The process of reproduction starts in a part of the organism itself. There is the hereditary transmission of enormously complicated physico-chemical structures. The organism nourishes itself by assimilation of materials from its environment. The two are so well adapted to each other that they may be regarded as expressions of a larger whole. There is a specific inner direction in living organisms which grow, repair and reproduce themselves. Life is a different order of facts.
6.5.5.3 Mind

Mental phenomena are different from vital activities. The relation between the organism and the environment which we discover in the physical and the biological worlds becomes more intimate in the mental world through organs of sense and action. Through the organs of vision and hearing, an animal is able to keep in touch with distant environment. Animals learn from experience. They modify their behaviour in the light of previous results.

Self-Preservation becomes consciously directed through the feelings of pleasure and pain, of benefit and injury to the organism. The animal acts as a whole and not simply in parts. Conscious Behavior, adaptive and selective, is different from physical reaction or life adjustment. It is something new and distinctive, unique and creative. It is a function of a later evolved and special integration of life. It is a new level of Reality with its own peculiarities and laws.

6.5.5.4 Self-Consciousness

A reflective mind is different from the unreflective instinct. The reflective capacity of the human mind and its power of free invention are not mere complications of lower instincts. It is the essence of self-conscious intelligence to look before and after and vary action according to circumstances. In the passage from animal to man we find not a gradual development but a sudden break, a leap into a new form of experience. If man is able to dominate nature today, it is not because of his physical nature, but
because of his intelligence which enables him to adapt himself to new and varying situations. Knowledge is the distinguishing feature of human consciousness.

Man has a self, a unit which is more than a sum of its subordinate parts. It is an active living whole, a body-mind, the latest term in evolutionary process. The human self is an emergent aspect of the world process. Self is not a collection of mental states but is characterized by an organisation. The human individual has to work his evolution consciously and deliberately. He has to act responsibly and co-operate willingly with the purpose of evolution.

6.5.5.5 Spirit

The evolution shall not come to an end with the thinking man. There is a further step to be taken. The human self-consciousness should grow into comprehensive vision into illumined consciousness.

At the spiritual level, the individual becomes aware of the substance of spirit, not as an object of intellectual cognition, but as an awareness in which the subject becomes its own object, where it is aware of itself as the basis of reality. The spirit which is inclusive of both self and object, is self-subsistent and self-consistent. Spirit is something essentially and purely inward to be known only to grow within.

The spiritualised man is a new genus of man, exhibiting a new quality of life. They are the saved souls otherwise called "Free Spirits" (Ivan muktas).
6.5.6 The Goal of the Cosmic Process

The ultimate goal and meaning of history of the cosmic process is to make all men prophets, to establish the Kingdom of Free spirits or supermen. There will be a gradual transmutation of intellect into spirit, when the son of man becomes Son of God. The whole cosmic process is marching towards the future, which is infinitely rich and spiritually impregnated, to reach the goal of history. The Free Spirits (Jivan muktas) who are spiritual geniuses, do not separate themselves from the world, but take up the responsibility of guiding those still in darkness to the light. They inspire, revive and strengthen the life of their generation.

Their reason is turned into light, their heart into love and their will to service. Their life is socially minded. It is a conviction of the solidarity of the world (Lokasangraha) and a recognition that high and low are bound together in one spirit. 29

6.5.7 Brahma-loka or the Kingdom of God

So long as there is struggle in the process of becoming, in overcoming the Non-being (Prakiti) by being (God or Purusha) we continue to have the time process. But when all individuals have escaped from their alienation, when all externality is overcome there is the awakening of the spirit in all of them. When the transfiguration of the cosmos, the revolutionary change in men's consciousness, a new relationship among them and an assimilation to God takes place; the Kingdom of God is established on earth. It is the attainment of wholeness, the overcoming of disruption by Being over
Non-being, the transcending of time, which we objectify as *Brahmaloka*. When the Kingdom of God is established, when the goal of the cosmic process is completed, when all the individual souls overcome their alienation, the distinction between world and God vanishes and God lapses into the Absolute.

### 6.5.7.1 End of the World

It is sometimes held in the theistic religions that the liberated souls exist in the kingdom of God, eternally singing and praising Him and enjoying his blissful presence along with the community of the Free Spirits. Radhakrishnan does not agree with such a view, expressed not only in Christianity but also in Vaishnavism and other theistic religions. According to him, the world continues to exist so long as the imperfect souls remain there without attaining liberation. But the moment all the *jivas* attain perfection, the world is resurrected and the cosmic drama comes to an end. To him meaning of time and history is beyond the confines of time. He argues that time is meaningless if it is endless. Time process can be understood only in the light of the end it aims at. The goal of the cosmic process is victory over time, victory over the fallen conditions. It is Life Eternal.

Radhakrishnan hopes that the present order of things must pass away for, he believes that there will be a number of other world orders to rise in an endless series. This is proved even from the scientific point of view. If the universe was wound up once then what prevents it from being wound up again if another possibility requiring this type of structure is to be started.\(^{30}\)
6.5.8  Meaning and Significance of History in the World

According to A.C. Bouquet, the modern Western world has learned to think historically, through the influence of Judaism and Christianity which are absolutely bound up with convictions about certain historical events. The Christian regards the history of the earth as an unique phenomenon in time, the product of an irreversible process ordered by Divine Providence leading upto a definite and desirable goal in the future.

Very much influenced by philosophers of History like Spengler and Arnold Toynbee and realistic theories of Evolution and the pluralistic Systems, Radhakrishnan attempts to offer a positive view of history. Though it is difficult to come to a conclusion that he has systematically developed a philosophy of history, it can certainly be said that he has offered a positive view of history by his realistic interpretation of the Doctrine of mâyā and a restatement of the Doctrine of Karma where man's freedom to alter his future course, is exercised. The realistic interpretation which Radhakrishnan has given to notions of world and individual souls certainly bear significant implications for a view of meaning accorded to history. The world has its origin, sustenance and final end in the Absolute. The beginning and the end are merely ideal and the pathway between the two, is the universe, consisting of human individuals who are pilgrims. In Radhakrishnan's scheme, creative theory of evolution, the retention of human values and the individual souls till the cosmic end to find their destinies, offers a significant meaning to the history of the world, seeking the redemption of all beings, including the world. In presenting a realistic view of the Universe and affirming the process of
cosmic evolution as a movement of history, and describing the Universe as a perpetual flow of events, Radhakrishnan has indicated that there is a meaning and purpose in history.

All the time the Christian task is to bring human society into conformity with divine pattern. St. Paul expects a period of progressive development culminating in the fulfillment of the purpose of creation through agony and travail. The philosophies which believe in a series of ascending levels are emergent or a creative evolution, accept the progress in history. There is a purpose in cosmic process.\textsuperscript{31}

He refers to W.R. Inge who conceded that: "there may be an immanent teleology in shaping the life of the human race towards some completed development which has not yet been reached".\textsuperscript{32}

In Prof.A.Toynbee’s view: "the breakdowns and disintegrations of civilizations might be the stepping stones to higher things on the religious plane".\textsuperscript{33}

By taking, Modern Scientific, Philosphic and Religious views from the Western tradition, and by incorporating them into his scheme of thought, Radhakrishnan has attempted to satisfy the Western man who seeks world affirmation and a historical meaning of life with a purpose, progress and goal.
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